of superstitions based on the belief that a person's hair, nails, saliva, or even his shadow, his image or his name spoken aloud could be acted upon for good or evil. In the Baranya, for instance, unrequited lovers gather the dirt bearing the footprint of their loved ones and carry it in their handkerchiefs. There is also the belief that the burning of the hair or nails will cause the destruction of the owner of these bodily parts. 789 826

Many superstitions are rooted in the primitive belief in the magic power of the spoken word. Accordingly, incantations--some of them traceably pre-literary--have developed for blessing or cursing others. Spells used for healing either invoke benevolent spirits or chase away the evil ones. 789

Certain types of witchcraft have to be performed naked or with the clothing worn inside out in order to purify the man and to ward off the influence of disturbing spirits inhabiting the clothes. Many of the charms to be performed naked foretell one's marriage partner and one's happiness in married life; others heal or combat natural disasters, such as fire, epidemics or storms. [787]

To the peasant's mind, diseases are of threefold cause: demons, natural forces, or the magic transfer of diseases from others. 753 755

finds utterance through queer, musical instruments and other methodes of expression . . . 533

Minstrelsy is one of the most ancient Hungarian customs and is still practised in some 170 Hungarian villages, especially in Transdanubia and in a few places amongst the most eastern tribe of the Magyars, that is amongst the Szeklers. The many, to-day unintelligible words, variations, choruses and references to obsolete versions have often puzzled science, and will surely do so even more frequently in the future. Mysterious in itself is the Hungarian word for minstrel : «regös», which is the name of the performer ; the word «regölés» means the act of minstrelsy. These are obsolete words ; the minstrels themselves do not know their meaning. In order to understand the custom, we must know its origin, though one or two of our readers may find this explanation somewhat lengthy and uninteresting.

The word «regös» is derived from the same root as the Hungarian word «rejt» which means to hide something, and the «regös» is nothing but a person who «hides something». To this day Hungarians call a person who falls into trance a person who «rejtezik» that is «hides». Wonderful things are still told about persons who «hide», i. e. fall into a trance. They are supposed to be able to foretell the future, and they are considered especially capable of communicating with the dead, from whom they bring messages and whose wishes they interpret. They are supposed to travel through Heaven and talk to its inhabitants, — not merely to acquaintances, who have just died, but to such distinguished souls as Abraham of the Old Testament. A Szekler girl described her journey to Heaven, the people she had met, and the heavenly situation in general as she had seen it in her trance. These «dead-alive» people are highly esteemed even to-day, and were more so in the past. John Arany, the famous Hungarian epic poet, who knew the Great Hungarian Plain like no one else, was 787 [828] 787 538

787 fully aware of the importance of trances and this is what his
538 hero, who had to go into exile and was longing to perform great deeds, says in his popular poem, Toldi :

Good Bence, you tell my mother,
Her son's star has gone into mourning just now :
For a long while she will not see nor hear from him,
His fame will be buried, as though he were dead.
But he won't die, only disappear,
As one does if one hides very deeply,
And when he wakes after a certain time,
Wonderful things will be told about him.

787 If we remember that the Hungarians, like many other
857 people, were adherents of Shamanism in a certain period of their ancient history, these remnants can easily be understood. But the Shaman, the priest of the pagan Shamanism, is not only a fortune teller, who can look beyond the veil, but, as is usually the case in the religious and social life of more primitive people, is also a doctor and magician, who drives away illnesses and cures them not with medicines, but with magic spells and songs. And if «he wants to hide» — that is in modern parlance — if he wants to fall into trance, besides other things, he prepares himself by dancing, singing and by performing to the accompaniment of drums ceremonial exercises which need superhuman strength. Traces of this can be found even to this day in Hungarian folklore ; of course as in so many other cases merely in the children's playful rhymes :

Stork, stork, turtle-dove,
Why are your feet bleeding?
Turkish children have cut them,
Hungarian children will cure them,
With pipes, drums and violins . . .

781 In the game which goes with this little rhyme, they beat each other with great noise and rapid gesticulation. In mins-

In mins—

787 trelsy, when the descendants of the ancient Shamans come
533 to the mysterious refrain of the magicians, they make a «frigh-
[534] tening» noise with their instruments, and they top this with sounds imitating all kinds of animals. Their «musical» instruments are : a stick with a chain, a pipe and an extraordinary instrument — a potsherd covered with a pig's bladder. In the middle of this tight bladder is a tiny hole, with a reed stuck into it. If someone draws a wet finger along the reed, a queer, droning noise occurs. This instrument is a predecessor of the drum ; some versions of minstrels' songs say : «our drum is a fine iron pot», though the drum may not be of iron, but of earthenware. To these instruments occasionally bells are added and other noisy implements : lids made of tin and such like.

The «refrain», containing the magic words, is an important part of minstrelsy ; the «refrain» has many variations ; but according to learned reconstruction this is what the original words were :

My hiding place is an old law,
Holla ! I hide in songs !

533 meaning : «my magic has old laws, I conjure with songs !»
527 The custom belongs to the feasts of the winter solstice (December the 25th) and therefore in most places about Christmas time the Hungarian minstrels go from house to house. They are fairly grown up boys or lads. Sometimes three or four go together, in other places some thirty or fourty. They usually pay their visit in the evening, at night or at dawn. They generally visit houses where there are marriageable girls, but the Szeklers go to the newly married couples. In a few districts their songs begin with references to an apparition of God :